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A Citizen's Committee Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

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MEMORANDUM

: Culture and Recreation Committee

ecommunications Policy Committee

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Culture and Recreation Committee

FROM: Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee

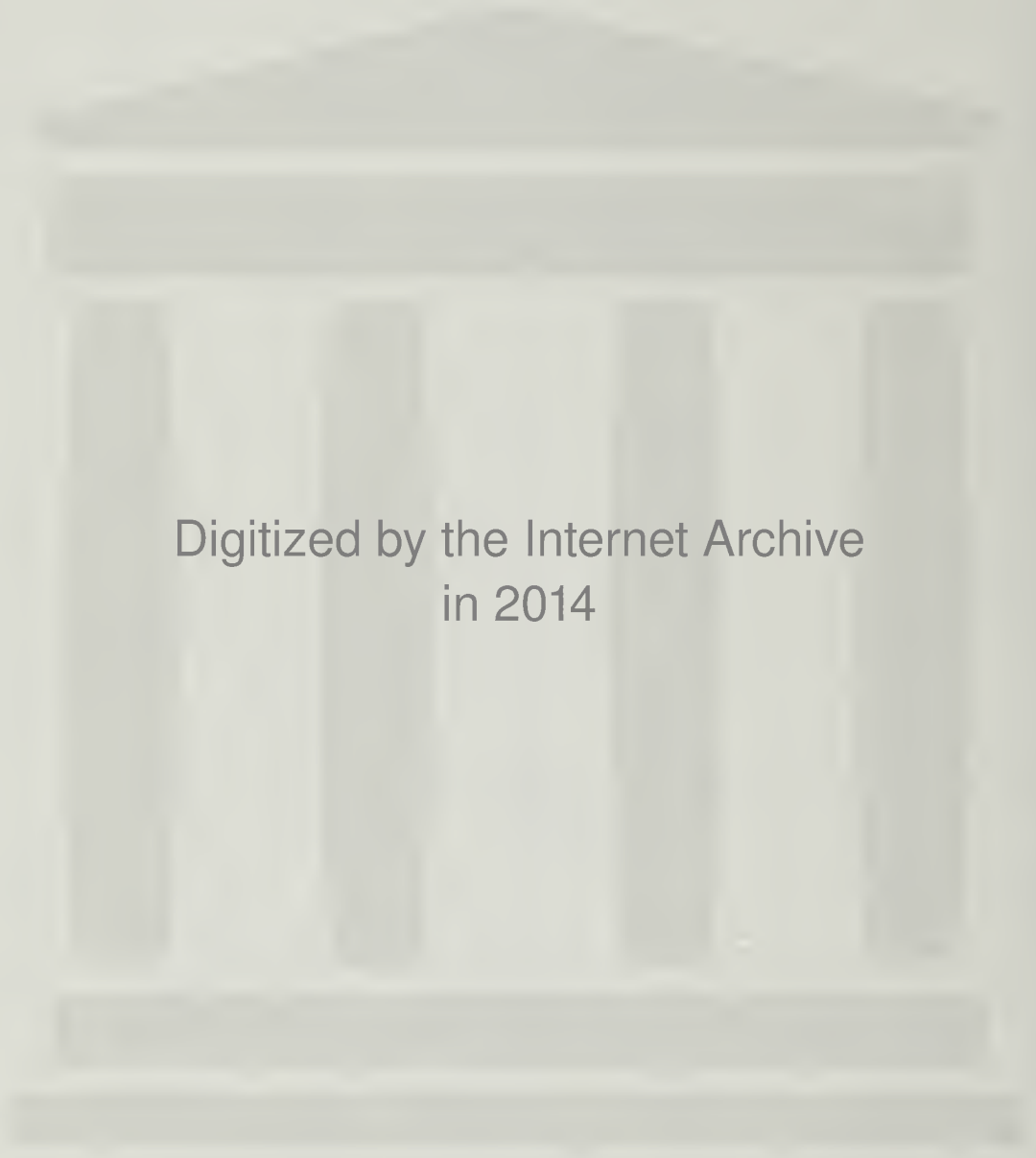
DATE: 10/31/85

On September 5, 1985, a proposed resolution was heard by the Culture and Recreation Committee which would approve the concept of cablecasting of public meetings and installing the wiring and related improvements to the Board of Supervisors Chambers and Committee Room.

Pursuant to a request from the Culture and Recreation Committee the Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee and the Budget Analyst were directed to report on the following issues:

1) Procedures for gavel-to-gavel coverage (see p.2 and 3);
2) Identification of the Viacom Cablevision channel on which the Board of Supervisors would be cablecast (see p.6 and 7);
3) Equipment quality (see p.2, 3, and 14);
4) Production staff (see p.13);
5) Reliability and scheduling of programming (see p.4 and 5);
6) Precise costs of cablecasting Board of Supervisors meetings (see p.8-14); and
7) Who pays for the programming (see p.8-9).

Based on interviews with other cities operating municipal channels, advice from City and County departments currently producing programming, and an assessment of the physical requirements of the Chambers and Committee Room in City Hall, the Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee makes the following recommendations: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https://archive.org/details/cablecastingofpu3119sanf

I. That the Proposed Municipal Access Policies statement as drafted by the CTPC be adopted. The attached statement delineates the purposes, policies, and services a San Francisco municipal channel can provide;

II. That the Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee be given authority by ordinance to set policies for municipal access operations and that the CTPC study existing City agencies to determine the feasibility of assuming actual operations and management.

III. That live cablecasting of the Board of Supervisors commence in mid-1987.

IV. That the costs of cablecasting Board of Supervisors meetings be supported by shared contributions between Viacom Cablevision for cable wiring and its installation, access development funds, and in-kind support from the City and County, where available.

V. That the responsibility for the establishment and operation of the municipal access channel and its related activities shall lie solely with the City and County of San Francisco and not be the responsibility of Viacom Cablevision.

Attached is the report which discusses in detail the specific recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberto Esteves, Chair
Emily Pike, Chair,
Municipal Access Subcommittee
Rhonda Abrams
George Kelsey
Cary Fong
Michael Singsen
Gwen Dilworth-Battle
Hal Layer
Sue Levitin

RECOMMENDATION I --

That the Proposed Municipal Access Policies statement as drafted by the CTPC be adopted.

PROPOSED MUNICIPAL ACCESS POLICIES

PURPOSES

The municipal access channel is for the use of City and County departments and city-sponsored agencies.

The purposes of the City and County of San Francisco's Municipal Access Program shall be as follows:

1. To disseminate over the cable system to the citizens of San Francisco non-partisan information about City and County services, programs, and policies;

2. To enhance public awareness of the actions and deliberations of City and County policy bodies by providing information and coverage of public hearings and meetings; and

3. To promote City and County services which aid the economic development of San Francisco, especially those which generate revenues through increased patronage; and to increase the cost-effectiveness of service delivery by City and County departments and agencies.

PROPOSED POLICIES FOR MUNICIPAL CABLECASTING

A. Programming

1. No partisan programming will be cablecast nor will the municipal access channel be used for partisan purposes.

2. No programming which would violate any federal, state, or local law will be cablecast.

3. Programs containing obscene, indecent, or defamatory material will not be cablecast, according to Supreme Court standards.

4. No commercial programming or programming which promotes or advertises the sale of any product or service except municipal products or services will be cablecast nor will the municipal access channel be used for commercial or non-governmental purposes.

5. Programming will be cablecast of C-SPAN quality.

6. Programs containing copyrighted materials will be cablecast only if copyright clearance has been obtained.

7. All programming of elected and municipal officials and agencies shall be covered by the Fair Use Doctrine.

8. All videotapes submitted from other sources for cablecasting must be sponsored by a certified municipal user and will be previewed by the managing City department and selected in accordance with the following criteria:

a) Relevance of the subject matter or content to City and County government;
b) Adherence to these municipal utilization policies; and
c) Technical quality.

9. Any programming prepared by or provided by an individual City department may be modified or edited as appropriate and as dictated by scheduling. Edited programs shall be subject to the review of the deparment submitting the program. The originating department will have the right to withdraw the edited version if it is unacceptable.

10. Duplication or loans of videotapes of Board of Supervisors meetings or their Committees are subject to approval of the Rules and Legislation Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

11. A log will be maintained as a record of all programming cablecast on the municipal access channel.

12. The Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee will advise the managing City department and will be responsible for insuring that the municipal access channel is utilized in accordance with these municipal policies and procedures.

B. Coverage of Board of Supervisors/Committee/Board/Commission Meetings.

1. Meetings will be covered gavel to gavel with no reaction shots and with the camera focused on the recognized speaker or according to other procedures approved by the Rules and Legislation Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

2. Recorded meetings will not be edited or subjected to editorial comment.

3. Meetings, will be cablecast live, if possible. If live cablecasting is not possible, the meeting will be taped for cablecasting the same day or at other convenient times as determined by the managing City department.

DEFINITIONS SECTION

Technical quality shall be defined by the following:

1) unbroken sync signal
2) acceptable exposure and focus
3) acceptable vertical and horizontal picture alignment
4) Correct color temperature
5) a minimum of 260 lines of resolution
6) in compliance with the equivalent or greater than FCC technical standards in existance on October 15, 1985.
7) comparable to C-SPAN technical quality.

RECOMMENDATION II.--

That the Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee be given authority by ordinance to set policies for municipal access operations and that the CTPC study existing City agencies to determine the feasibility of assuming actual operations and management.

POLICY

Management of channel programming and production staff and all related activities shall remain with the City and County of San Francisco, and not with Viacom Cablevision.

Policies and procedures for the Board of Supervisors' meeting coverage will be established by the Rules and Legislation Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

The Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee will make recommendations directly to the administration of the department responsible for operations on policy matters related to the municipal channel.

OPERATIONS

Departments that the CTPC has considered to be evaluated for the capability of managing municipal access operations include:

1. The San Francisco Public Library.
The San Francisco Public Library has operating video and audio facilities and has cooperatively produced programming with other City departments.

2. Telecommunications, Department of Public Works.
DPW Telecommunications is currently coordinating with individual City departments the establishment of a new telephone system for the City and County.

3. The Chief Administrative Officer.
The Chief Administrative Officer is in charge of City Hall operations and has certain responsibilities designated in the Viacom franchise.

4. The Recreation and Parks Photographic Lab.

The Photographiy Center provides photographic services and hands-on use of darkroom materials to the general public.

5. The Reproduction Department.

The Reproduction Department provides printing, graphics, and photographic services to City departments.

RECOMMENDATION III --

That live cablecasting of the Board of Supervisors commence in mid-1987.

CHANNEL TIME

As of this date, Viacom Cablevision has no available separate channel for municipal access, nor do they have time available on a channel to share with other programming, with one exception.

However, Viacom Cablevision has agreed to activate the municipal channel in 1988.

For live cablecasting of the Board of Supervisors to commence by mid-1987 the following conditions would have to be met:

a) equipment for production must be available;
b) a departmental organization must be chosen to manage programming;
c) staff must be hired;
d) policies, procedures, and a channel must be approved; and
e) funding needs to be identified.

Once these conditions are met, several options may be available for channel time prior to 1988.

Option 1: Channel 25

Cablecasting could begin in 1986 if Viacom's Channel 25 series policy were changed to allow expanded time for playback and a regular guaranteed time slot.

Notes:

1. Board of Supervisors meetings cablecast live and with weekly repeats would require a maximum of 16 hours of channel time which would displace sixteen hours of community-produced programming.

2. If Viacom were to change the policies of Channel 25, it would be a significant departure from the first-come first-serve policy of Channel 25 and public access.

3. Channel 25 currently reaches a subscriber base of 90,000 homes, however, no figures are available regarding the audience share of Channel 25.

Option 2: Reallocation of a must-carry channel.

Viacom Cablevision is currently required to carry 19 channels under an existing FCC rule. Recent court rulings regarding the FCC must-carry requirements suggest that cable operators may not be required to carry local broadcast signals.

If the rule were repealed, Viacom Cablevision may consider replacing some broadcast signals. As of this writing, Viacom does not intend to make any changes in its carriage of local broadcasters, as the court decisions are being challenged.

Option 3: Activation of a channel above Channel 36.

Over half the City and County of San Francisco should be wired by mid-1986. Viacom Cablevision has stated that if they turn on a channel above Channel 36 prior to 1988, they will not be reaching all subscribers with the same scope of services, as required by the franchise.

The Board of Supervisors may wish to exempt Viacom from this franchise provision for the activation of the municipal channel.

Option 4: Using time on an existing channel.

The Board of Supervisors meetings would require a minimum of 16 hours of guaranteed channel time at the times of scheduled meetings.

Viacom Cablevision indicates they may be able to share a channel with other programming for Board of Supervisors purposes prior to 1988.

RECOMMENDATION IV.--

That the costs of cablecasting Board of Supervisors meetings be supported by shared contributions between Viacom Cablevision for cable wiring and its installation, access development funds, and in-kind support from the City and County, where available.

PROJECTED COSTS OF CABLECASTING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETINGS

The projected costs of cablecasting Board of Supervisors' meetings were broken down into these categories:

- Building Capital Costs
  - Cable Wiring and its Installation
- Production Costs
  - Production Staff
  - Production Materials
  - Production Equipment

Building Capital Costs are the one time only costs needed to make the Chambers and Committee Room 228 cable television-capable.

Production Costs are for one day per week of production annually, and the initial cost of production equipment. Staff time per hour of production is projected to be $45/hour; materials are projected to be $20/hour.

Equipment will be portable and easily stored. Equipment purchases will be depreciated over a five-year period, and shared between municipal agencies on a cost basis when not in use for Board cablecasting.

TABLE 1: INITIAL COSTS OF CABLECASTING BY ROOM

	CHAMBERS	COMMITTEE ROOM 228
Building Capital	$31,531 (plus wiring and cabinet)	$32,500
Production Costs		
Staff, with fringe @ $45/hour	$23,412	$23,412
Materials, @ $20/hour	$8,320	$8,320
Equipment	$67,700 (Can be shared with Committee Rm.)	$67,700 (Can be shared with Chambers)
Totals	$130,963 (plus wiring and cabinet)	$131,932

POTENTIAL PRODUCTION CONTRIBUTIONS

Initial production equipment expenses may be offset by:

1. Using the San Francisco Public Library's camera, valued at $25,000; and
2. Expending a portion of the Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee access development funds for equipment over a three-year period.

Annual production expenses may be offset by:
1. Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee access development funds dedicating 20 hours/week of the Municipal Services Coordinator's time, valued at $13,704;
2. The San Francisco Public Library providing a camera operator with the camera, valued at $5,320; and the
3. Citizens' Telecommunications Policy Committee access development funds providing supplies and maintenance, valued at $8,200.

BUILDING CAPITAL EXPENSES FOR LIVE CABLECASTS

Installation and Wiring of the Chambers and Committee Room:

Summary

The Chambers and the Committee Room 228 were reviewed by Viacom engineering staff for the requirements of installation and wiring for the capability of cablecasting. The general conclusions are as follows:

1. The Chambers would be extremely difficult to cablecast from, unless lighting conditions, and power were improved, while maintaining the architectural integrity of the room.

2. The Committee Room, conversely, would be much more easily adapted to cablecasting. Adequate light levels and power are available in the room; and additional lighting instruments and the equipment cabinet can be permanently installed without adversely affecting the design of the room.

Chambers Requirements:

1. A permanently installed equipment cabinet can be architecturally designed to complement the Chambers. It needs to be extremely near, if not in, the Chambers. There are two options given the lack of available conduit for cable:

    A. A complementary design for an equipment cabinet can be installed in the Chambers.

    B. Cables can run across the floor to reach a permanently installed equipment cabinet near to the Chambers in 237B.

2. For both options, power outlets can be installed in the room(s) for the operation of the production equipment and the cabinet.

3. The equipment cabinet has to be easily accessible during production to adjust picture controls. Floor space for the cabinet and an additional person would require approximately four by five square feet. Height could approximate eight feet. The cabinet needs to be well-ventilated.

4. Installing the equipment cabinet in the Committee Room, and running audio and video cable on the outside of the building would not be advisable. The length would require a distribution amplifier in 228, which would degrade picture quality.

5. The existing light fixtures can be used with special bulbs, tripling the available light in the Chambers.* Additional fixtures could not be permanently installed without adversely affecting the architecture of the Chambers. Portable lights are not advisable, due to the disruption of normal activity in the Chambers.

6. The existing light fixtures can be controlled with the installation of a rheostat, or dimmer switch, to brighten the lights only when needed. This would allow the lights to remain at their existing levels at all other times.

* The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board may be requested to provide possible solutions to this problem.

Chambers Costs

Summary

Viacom has stated they are responsible for the cable wiring and its installation only, at no charge to the City and County according to the franchise.

The one time only costs for the equipment and its cabinet are $29,000, design and construction of a cabinet to complement the Chambers is an additional cost, to be determined in consultation with the City Architect.

According to the City Electrician, special bulbs have been used before in the Chambers' existing fixtures to raise the overall light levels in the room. These bulbs are relatively expensive, have a short life, and would be used extensively once a week. The City Hall Building Superintendent reports that it will take two people to change bulbs in the fixtures. The costs for using the existing fixtures would be $531 and wiring the circuits separately for brightness control by rheostat.

The Bureau of Building Repair would charge for the addition of power outlets, and the City Electrician reports that there should be no difficulty with installing the AC power if the necessary alteration of the Chambers were approved.

Chambers Costs

Cable Wiring and its installation	No charge
Modulator	$2,000
Time Base Corrector	$17,000
Additional signal amplifiers, if needed	$12,000
AC Power Wiring	To Be Determined
Cabinet design and construction	To Be Determined
Bulbs, @ $295 ea., 180 bulbs	$531
Total	$31,531 (plus wiring and cabinet)

Committee Room Requirements

Summary

1. A permanent equipment cabinet can be installed in the far left hand corner of the Committee Room, or in the left hand supplies closet. Room is available for the operator to access the cabinet, and a vent is installed. If the closet is utilized, the shelves and the inner door would need to be removed.

2. Power and lights are available.

3. Lights could be permanently mounted to enhance the video picture without adversely affecting the room's design.

4. There is easy access to the outside of the building, allowing the cable to be strung directly to Viacom's system.

Committee Room Costs

Cable Wiring and its Installation	No charge
Modulator	$2,000
Time Base Corrector	$17,000
Additional signal amplifiers, if needed	$12,000
Lights and mounts	1,500
Total	$32,500

ANNUAL PRODUCTION EXPENSES FOR LIVE CABLECASTS BY ROOM

Production Staff Requirements:

1. Coordination of production, preproduction, and postproduction elements, scheduling, and playback.

2. Routine maintenance of equipment.

3. Two camera operators, a technical director, and a director are required for ten hours per week.

Production Staff Costs

Coordinator, .25FTE, includes fringe	$ 6,852
3 Technical Operators, .25FTE @ $5,520	16,560
Total	$23,412

Notes:

1. The Clerk of the Board reports that Board of Supervisors meetings can occasionally run as long as eight hours. With one hour of set-up in advance, and one hour to break down the equipment, production crew is needed for ten hours weekly.
2. Three .25FTE position to operate the cameras and monitor the signal would be required.
3. Sound recording is accomplished by a direct feed off the PA system, and does not require a separate operator.
4. Lighting would be set up in advance of the meetings, and does not require a separate lighting director.

Production Materials Costs

Videotape, 8 hours/week	$6,000
Equipment Maintenance	2,320
Total	$8,320

Notes:

1. Videotape would be erased and recycled twice for maximum use.
2. The cost of videtape would increase if the Board desired to keep copies on file for archival purposes, or for circulation.

Production Equipment Requirements:

1. Must be portable to maximize use of equipment.
2. Must be comparable to C-SPAN quality.
3. Must be professionaly produced with two cameras.
4. Must provide identification of Supervisors on-camera.

Production Equipment Costs

Porta-Studio
Includes 3/4" "straight cut" U-matic editing system; includes player/controller/editor VCR machines; two 5" monitors; provides effects switching between two or more cameras; triple 5" black and white monitors and two 13" color monitors; switcher/special effects generator; sync generator with distribution amplifiers; audio mixer; and our cabinet design.
$20,000

Low-light camera, SONY BVP250
25,000

Low-light camera, compatible with the SONY BVP250
16,000

2 Fluid head tripods and dollies
1,000

Cables and miscellaneous electrical
500

Videotext system/character generator
Cost to be determined by the CTPC and Viacom

Headsets
200

Portable VCR, industrial quality
5,000

Total $67,700

Notes:

1. A test using the Library's camera was made in the Chambers to determine if Board coverage could possibly be shot without lights. Pushing the camera's low-light capacity to its limit results in a very "grainy" picture, although viewable. Results of the test indicate that coverage of meetings in the Chambers needs additional lighting.
2. The equipment specified by the CTPC is portable, and would be set-up in advance of the meetings. Please see the attached floorplans of the Chambers and Committee Room for the proposed location of the equipment during Board meetings.
3. The equipment needs to be stored in the vicinity of City Hall. The closest location is 237B.

APPENDIX A--

BACKGROUND ON CABLECASTING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETINGS

The decision to cablecast rests solely with the Board of Supervisors and the question of legitimacy needs to be determined by its members. However, the following facts may be useful in the Board's deliberations.

1. Viacom Cablevision currently reaches approximately 90,000 homes. By 1988, Viacom projects completing the construction plan as approved by the Board.

2. The following California cities are reported by the Foundation for Community Service Cable Television to be cablecasting City Council or Board of Supervisors meetings:

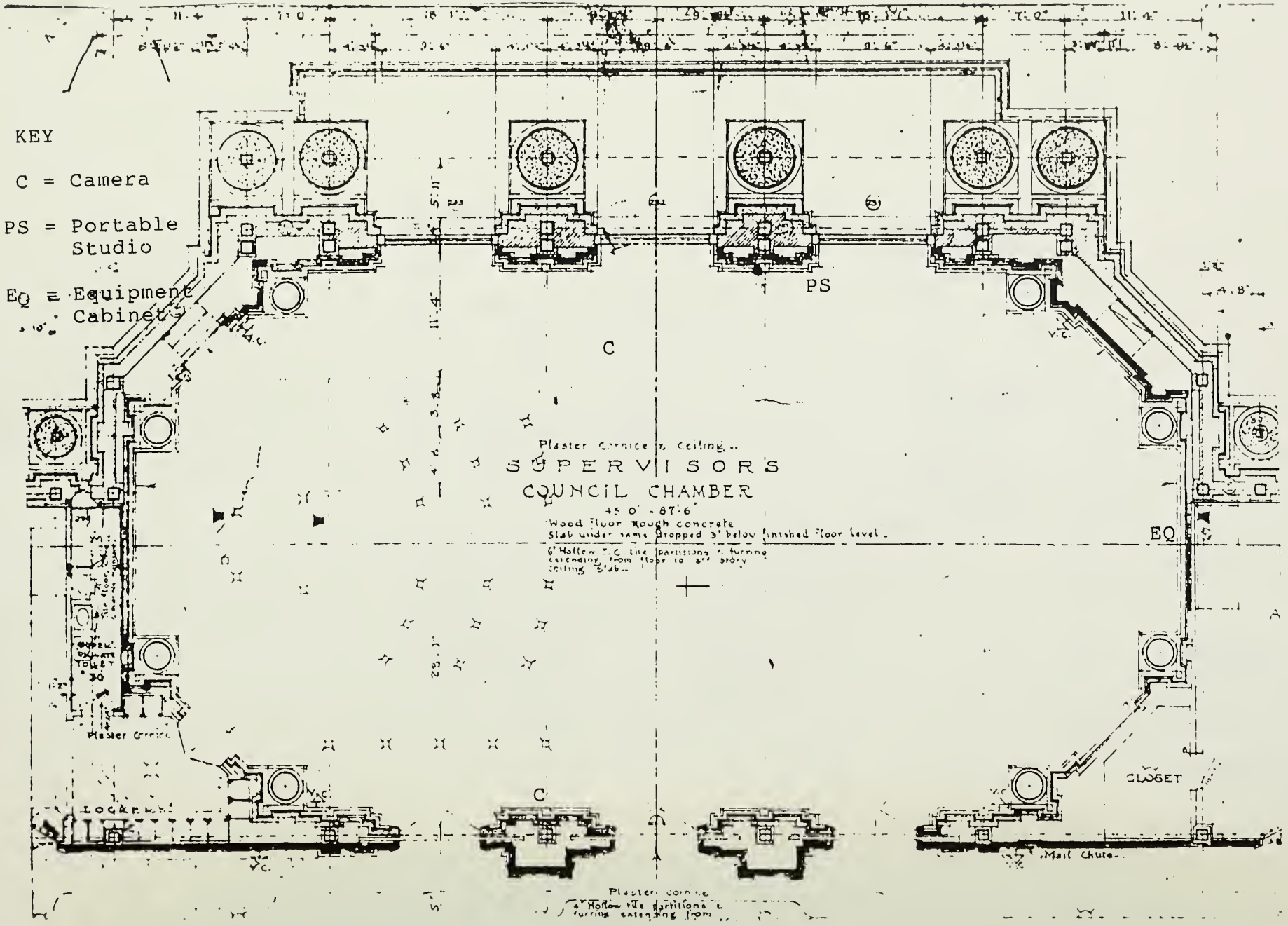
Oakland
Huntington Beach
Compton
Torrance
Lakewood
Beverly Hills
El Segundo
Newport Beach
Newark
Chico
Lancaster
South San Francisco
Fairfield
Hayward
Fresno
Novato
Marin
Pittsburg
Cupertino
Sierra Madre
Hawthorne
Long Beach
Norwalk
South Gate
Seal Beach
Capitola
Monterey
Rio Vista
Santa Rosa
Modesto
Turlock
Simi Valley

3. C-SPAN, the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network, reports in its October 14, 1985 issue of C-SPAN Update, that it can now be received in 21.5 million homes via 1,950 cable systems throughout the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. C-SPAN is six years old.

The core of C-SPAN's programming is live gavel-to-gavel coverage of the House of Representatives in session. Coverage is unedited without editorial comment. When the House is in recess, the schedule includes coverage of congressional hearings, major conventions, press conferences, public issues forums, National Press Club addresses, and a variety of special events in Washington and the U.S.

APPENDIX B

FLOORPLANS OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' CHAMBERS AND COMMITTEE ROOM 228


KEY
C = Camera
PS = Portable Studio
EQ = Equipment Cabinet
PS
C
EQ
SUPERVISORS
COUNCIL CHAMBER
45 0" - 87'-6"
Wood floor Rough concrete
Slab under same dropped 3" below finished floor level.
Plaster Cornice
Lockers
CLOSET
Mail Chute

COMMITTEE ROOM 228

KEY

C = Camera

PS = Portable Studio

EQ = Equipment Cabinet